



# Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong **MOTHER OF** 天主之母堂 **CHRIST CHURCH** 基督之母堂

## **Parish History** Yesterday

In the early years of Hong Kong, the wide area of lands in New Territories regions was mainly for use of agriculture and fish ponds. At that time, the Diocese of Hong Kong had not yet built the church neither in the New Territories area nor to appoint any priests. In this connection, the priests were sent from other urban (areas) to serve the faithful. They were required to go to different parishes, such as Yuen Long, Tai Po Market, Shatin and Sai Kung, etc. (rain or shine) and the priests lead a difficult life at that time.

On May 1, 1926, the Chancery Office announced that the New Territories (would be divided) into East New Territories Deanery and West New Territories Deanery. Sai Kung and Tai Po Market were the centre point of East New Territories Deanery and the West New Territories Deanery respectively. Sheung Shui region, was assigned to the West New Territories Deanery together with the other regions which included Tai Po, Fanling, Sha Tau Kok, Sha Tin, Yuen Long, Tsuen Wan. In 1953, Sheung Shui region was separated from the Tai Po parish and then assigned to Fanling parish after the Fanling parish was built.

In 1973, the Diocese of Hong Kong set up a Missionary Station at Sheung Shui. Rev. Antonio Garaventa was appointed by the late Bishop LEI, Wang-Kei Peter as the person-in-charge of the Missionary Station. At first, the Mass was held at the La Salle Secondary School. In 1974, Rev. Antonio Garaventa found two flats in Sheung Shui Shek Wu Market which (were suitable for the chapel and office). On October 26, 1974, Rev. Antonio Garaventa was officially appointed by the late Bishop LEI, Wang-Kei Peter as the person-in-charge for the missionary works in Sheung Shui region.

On May 13, 1975, the Feast of Our Lady of Fátima, the members of Legion of Mary went to recite the Rosary (at the faithful homes) as usual for the intention of setting up a parish in Sheung Shui. On the same day, Rev. Antonio Garaventa noticed that there was a site located at Sheung Shui which was suitable to build a church. Next day, the Diocese made a decision to buy that around 41,000m<sup>2</sup> land site at a consideration of HK\$690,000 and to reconstruct it to the church. That was when we finally had a stable Mass Centre.







## Today

At that time, the old church can only allow around 100 faithful. Due to the rising number of faithful and the increasing development of Sheung Shui region, the old church was rebuilt in December 4, 1988. Messrs. Li-Shi and Ng Yiu-wai, two well-known engineers were assigned to design and were responsible for the re-construction of the old church. During the re-construction period, the Mass was held in a kindergarten at Tin Ping Estate. The re-construction work of the old church was completed in October 1990. The first Mass of the new church was held on Christmas Eve in the same year.

On January 1, 1991, the late Cardinal WU Cheng-Chung John inaugurated the new church. The new church was described as the modern Catholic Church in the New Territories in those days. The construction cost nearly HK\$27 million at that time.

Rev. Antonio Garaventa ceased to be a parish priest of Mother of Christ Church in 1994 and was replaced by Fr. John Hines, who suffered from a heart attack and died on 5 September 1994 at the age of 45. A wake service and funeral Mass were held on September 9, 1994 by the late Cardinal WU Cheng-Chung John. Fr. John Hines' body was returned to United States for burial. On December 23, 1994, the Chancery Office announced that Rev. John P. Cuff was appointed as the parish priest of Mother of Christ Church.

For the period from April 1995 to March 1996, Rev. T.O. Kilkelly was also appointed as an assistant parish priest of Mother of Christ Church. During that period, the Mother of Christ Church made much innovation and expanded dramatically under the leadership of the two priests.

On December 3, 2000, the Chancery Office announced that Rev. V.M. Zavala C and Fr. S.A. Chavira Alvarez were appointed as the parish priest and assistant parish priest of Mother of Christ Church respectively. At the same time, Rev. John P. Cuff was assigned to take up another missionary work by his Seminary. Fr. S.A. Chavira Alvarez also ceased to be an assistant parish priest of Mother of Christ Church and was appointed as assistant parish priest of St. Alfred Church.







On October 15, 2003, the Chancery Office announced that Rev. Ledesma Fernando Montes and Rev. Luis Fernando Montano Rodriguez were appointed as the parish priest and assistant parish priest of Mother of Christ Church respectively.

In 2006, Rev. Luis Fernando Montano Rodriguez was assigned and sent to carry out the missionary work for the Chinese community in Australia by his Superior. Simultaneously, Rev. Fructuoso López Martin received his priesthood and returned to Hong Kong. He was then invited by Fr. Montes for assistance in Mother of Christ Church temporarily. On July 1, 2008, Rev. Fructuoso López Martin was officially appointed as an assistant parish priest of Mother of Christ Church by the Chancery Office.

On June 25, 2009, Rev. Mario E. Gutiérrez Carrejo was assigned as a parish priest of Mother of Christ Church, starting on October 1, in place of Fr. Montes by the Chancery Office. Fr. Montes left Hong Kong for another missionary work in his Institute in Mexico.

On July 19, 2010, the Chancery Office appointed Fr. Fructuoso López Martin to be the assistant parish priest of St. Peter's Parish. Therefore he was exempt of being the assistant parish priest for our parish; and at the same time Fr. Gonzalo Garcia Durán was appointed as assistant parish priest for our parish, starting on September 1,

